



Photo by Spc. David J. Coulombe

While verifying the area is secure, Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 112th Armored Regiment, Texas Army National Guard, scan the area for the enemy while a Romanian Army Red Scorpion Battalion TAB-77 — an Armored Amphibious Troop Carrier — provides cover.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Amy Bombassaro

Soldiers of the 877th Engineer Battalion, Alabama National Guard, construct a new roof on a Babadag Kindergarten school. Construction took place at a total of four rural schools in Babadag, Visina and Jurilovca during the exercise.

## Medical evacuation rehearsal gets dose of real world

By Spc. David Coulombe  
36th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office

With a medical evacuation exercise about to begin and ground crews standing by, the unexpected happens: a power failure. Instead of scrapping the exercise, cooler heads prevailed, and a solution was soon discovered.

The rehearsal was a tool used to train medics to react to an emergency while conducting military operations during ROMEX 05.

Using a role player simulating injuries and medics on the scene, it was quickly determined that a MEDEVAC was required. The medics were challenged by a real world variable. A power failure at the MEDEVAC headquarters in the rear halted communications. Without losing any valuable time, the medics on the scene called Range Control and relayed the message over a land line to the 159th Medical Air Ambulance Company. The request was received. Within minutes, a helicopter was in sight and smoke grenades were thrown in the road to mark the area.

Once on the ground, a medic emerged from the helicopter and reassessed the role-playing patient. He was quickly moved from the ambulance and onto the Blackhawk to be transported to a medical facility, ensuring the greatest chance of survival.

Before the exercise, Staff Sgt. Gene Belis, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 159th Medical Company, spoke confidently about the exercise and crew. Belis said they complete these missions all the time, to keep their skills sharp.

He further explained that each MEDEVAC team has a crew of four to five people; two pilots, a crew chief and one or two medics. The Blackhawk has the capacity to hold six litters, but Belis explained that holding the six litters makes it difficult to move and treat the patients while on the helicopter. By having four litter and two ambulatory patients, the medics can treat the patients more efficiently.

Belis went on to explain the importance of the “Golden Hour.” The “Golden Hour” refers to the one hour life-saving window to get the patient to a medical facility. Belis said that within

the one hour window, they have set a 10-minute rule. From the time the unit receives the MEDEVAC request, the unit has 10 minutes to lift off. They also have 10 minutes from the time the helicopter sets down to extract and lift off again.

With multiple moving parts and patient care a priority during MEDEVAC operations, Belis offered advice for Soldiers if ever faced with an emergency involving MEDEVAC.

“People want to help and sometimes rush the helicopter with the patient as soon as it sets down and that can create safety issues,” said Belis. “The best thing for them to do once we get there is to stand aside and let us do our jobs.”

After the helicopter landed at the County Hospital in Constanta and completed the rehearsal, the MEDEVAC crew visited children in the hospital, providing them with stuffed animals as a memento of the exercise.

The rehearsal was part of the final preparations U.S. and Romanian troops are conducting before training began July 19.



Medics from the 159th Medical Co. move a patient into a MEDEVAC helicopter.

U.S. Army photo

Vrinceanu said most of his Soldiers learn from experience since their Army is relatively young. “Each one of these experiences teaches us more,” said Vrinceanu. “All of us are happy working together with American Soldiers. This way both of our armies will continue to go in the right direction.”

At the ranges and in the training lanes, the same joint cooperation created an environment for Soldiers to hone their skills while developing interoperability with their NATO ally.

The Texas Army National Guard’s 71st Brigade Combat Team reorganized their units for the exercise by integrating one squad from the Romanian Army into each platoon.

State-of-the-art training equipment was transported from garrisons in Germany for use in the exercise. Deployable Intelligence Support Element equipment, used at two military operations in urban terrain sites, was a big hit with both U.S. and Romanian Soldiers.

“It’s amazing. This is just incredible training,” said a Romanian Soldier at the end of a mission.

Sgt. Bogden Stanei, Texas National Guard, who immigrated to the United States as a child, saw the training as a

once in a lifetime opportunity.

“This training has been great,” said Stanei. “We Guard Soldiers haven’t seen some of this equipment in previous training exercises and it’s a really good experience. Plus, the Romanian Soldiers we work with are catching on quickly. It’s been a lot of fun working together,” said Stanei.

The joint platoons have also executed convoy live fire missions. Basescu observed a demonstration of the exercise during his visit, watching as Romanian and U.S. Soldiers reacted after a simulated attack.

“This training prepares all Soldiers for deployments to military theaters of operation. It is one more step in our strategic partnership with the United States. The partnership is not only organized through political and economic relations, but also military,” said Basescu.

The barren lot outside the school where Ghincu Mircea served as principal for 39 years has been transformed into a playground. The community, unsure of how to show their gratitude, continually visited the site bearing gifts of fruit for the Soldiers. By the midpoint of the exercise, community mem-

bers had taken up hammers and paint brushes to work side by side with the Soldiers.

Construction took place at four rural schools.

Maj. Gary Beaty, civil military affairs officer, who organized the community development projects, said that the programs continued to strengthen the U.S. military’s relationship with Romania at the local level.

“Several of these schools are in desperate need for upgrades; it’s a good opportunity for us to get involved,” said Beaty.

Besides school renovations, other community relations programs were carried out among smaller groups.

The National Guard collected more than \$5000 in donations to provide six to eight schools with new supplies.

MEDEVAC Soldiers provided children with stuffed animals at Tulcea County Hospital while there for a medical evacuation training exercise.

Training was completed on Aug. 2, marked by an official closing ceremony, but the interoperability and camaraderie developed at ROMEX 05 will continue to be utilized.

# American, Bulgarian soldiers train together

By Spc. Sarah Stannard  
Det. 1, 111th Press Camp, Wyoming Army National Guard

Soldiers from the Büdingen-based 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment and Bulgarian soldiers participated in a weapons exchange shoot in conjunction with the joint training Exercise Immediate Response at Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria.

The United States and Bulgarian armies exchanged several weapons systems, allowing the troops to become familiar with and gain respect for foreign weapons systems, said Sgt. Ernesto Ortiz, an M-1A2 Abrams main battle tank gunner with 1-1st Cavalry.

“It’s a really good exercise be-

cause we can know what kind of equipment the countries we are fighting with down range have,” said Spc. Jorge Latorre, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment. “We can show them that too.”

As the first exercise on the range, American troops were given familiarization training, as well as the opportunity to fire the Bulgarian BMP, an armored infantry fighting vehicle. Bulgarian troops participated simultaneously in training on the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

“I think the exercise is really great. Getting out here and shooting their vehicles and them shooting ours is a great way to learn about our allies,” said Otiz.

Soldiers also participated in small arms training which included disassembly and reassembly procedures and firing. American Soldiers fired the Bulgarian rifle and machine gun while the Bulgarian Soldiers fired the M4 Carbine.

American Soldiers also brought with them the M240B and M203 for display.

“I feel very proud to bring my platoon here and to play with your platoon,” said Lt. Kovochoer of the Bulgarian army.

American and Bulgarian Soldiers will also participate in another live fire exercise at the end of the training exercise during their military operations urban terrain exercise (MOUT).

## Aviation battalion keeps medics ready to save lives

By Pfc. Tanya C. Polk  
1st Armored Division Public Affairs

Hanau-based Soldiers from the 127th Aviation Support Battalion provided aviation support to the medics and aircraft of the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) during Exercise Immediate Response 2005 in Bulgaria July 5-23.

On July 9, Soldiers of the “Workhorse” battalion transported fuel to the 45th’s four hungry UH 60 Blackhawks standing by at Bezmer Air Base, about an hour’s drive from the Novo Selo Training Area, where the exercise is taking place.

“We supply our birds with fuel,” said Sgt. LaToya Rhoden, a petroleum supply specialist with the 45th based in Katterbach, Germany. “The 127th helps provide us with the fuel we need,” she said.

In addition to providing fuel, 127th ASB tests fuel for purity. They provide Meals Ready to Eat, water and mechanical assistance to other Soldiers in need during the exercise. The 127th is also supporting 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment throughout the exercise.

Bulgarian civilians are also assisting the 45th. The local residents, contractors and businesspersons have helped to set up tents, serve chow and even help dispose of contaminated fuel for the Soldiers.

“They enjoy helping us out. They

want to be here to help us, and they try to help us out the best they can,” said Rhoden.

In addition to training U.S. and Bulgarian Soldiers for their combat missions, Exercise Immediate Response 2005 is helping to build relationships between the U.S. Soldiers and their Bulgarian hosts.

“They’re very eager to help out and do things we do,” said Spc. Kevin Weldon, a petroleum supply specialist with the 127th. “Their work ethics are very good. It makes soldiering a lot easier,” he said.



Photo by Tanya C. Polk

1st Lt. Jesse C. Johnson, 127th Aviation Support Battalion, tests the purity of fuel prior to supplying the 45th Medical Company’s aircraft at the Novo Selo Training Area in Bulgaria.